

Mayors Support Equal Pay

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

June 2016

June 30, 2016

The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Speaker DeLeo,

In 1945, Massachusetts passed the nation's first legislation addressing the gender pay gap, and yet 70 years later women of the Commonwealth still are disadvantaged by inequitable earnings compared to their male counterparts. We write today to ask for a vote on the Equal Pay Bill, S.2119.

Without action, the pay gap between women and men working full-time will not close before 2058. For women and their families in Massachusetts, this means a loss of about \$10,000 a year. Even worse, the gap grows if we consider women of color. We need coordinated action to finally close the gap and pay women the salary they deserve. Massachusetts led the way in 1945; it is now time to join the 11 states that passed legislation in the past two years, including California, New York, New Jersey, and Maryland.

When women — who make up half of the workforce and are the sole or primary breadwinners in 40 percent of the Commonwealth's households — are not paid fair wages, we all suffer. As James Rooney, CEO of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, asserted when announcing the Chamber's support for the proposed legislation, "Wage inequality not only affects businesses, it also has a negative impact on families and the overall Massachusetts' economy."

An Act to Establish Pay Equity (S.2119) would enable women to receive the salary they deserve, with common sense, business-friendly measures that build off of the efforts of previous legislation. First, it helps define what constitutes comparable work, providing a much-needed guideline to employers. Then, it protects individuals from having to reveal their pay history during job interviews, a practice that reinforces the cycle of pay discrimination for women and people of color. It also encourages pay transparency by protecting employees discussing their wages with other colleagues. The proposed legislation recognizes that there are valid reasons for wage differences, such as seniority, experience, geographic location or bona fide merit systems, all factors that are protected by the law. Finally, it encourages employers to conduct self-evaluations to show their good faith, in the process protecting them from abusive lawsuits.

We all have a role to play; individuals, businesses, and legislators. Closing the wage gap is a complex problem where a multi-pronged approach must be taken to address both policy and culture. This legislation is a critical component for ensuring a comprehensive approach to eliminating the wage gap in Massachusetts.

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Without equal pay, we undervalue hardworking women every single day. Support for An Act to Establish Pay Equity, S.2119, is the right thing to do — for Massachusetts' women, families, communities and businesses. It benefits everyone. We can't stand by and wait until 2058. We have waited long enough.

Thank you for your leadership on so many important issues facing the residents of Massachusetts this year. Let's make equal pay for women part of this historic year.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Cohen, Mayor, City of Agawam
Kevin J. Dumas, Mayor, City of Attleboro
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor, City of Boston
Joseph C. Sullivan, Mayor, Town of Braintree
Bill Carpenter, Mayor, City of Brockton
Melvin Kleckner, Town Administrator, Town of Brookline
E. Denise Simmons, Mayor, City of Cambridge
Richard C. Rossi, City Manager, City of Cambridge
Thomas Ambrosino, City Manager, City of Chelsea
Karen L. Cadieux, Mayor, City of Easthampton
Carlo DeMaria Jr., Mayor, City of Everett
Jasiel Correia II, Mayor, City of Fall River
Sefatia Romeo Theken, Mayor, City of Gloucester
William F. Martin, Mayor, Town of Greenfield
Alex Morse, Mayor, City of Holyoke
Daniel Rivera, Mayor, City of Lawrence
Edward J. Kennedy, Mayor, City of Lowell
Gary Christenson, Mayor, City of Malden
Stephanie Muccini Burke, Mayor, City of Medford
Robert J. Dolan, Mayor, City of Melrose
Donna D. Holaday, Mayor, City of Newburyport
Setti D. Warren, Mayor, City of Newton
Richard J. Alcombright, Mayor, City of North Adams
Edward A. Bettencourt, Jr., Mayor, City of Peabody
Linda Tyer, Mayor, City of Pittsfield
Thomas P. Koch, Mayor, City of Quincy
Brian M. Arrigo, Mayor, City of Revere
Kimberley Driscoll, Mayor, City of Salem
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor, City of Somerville
Domenic J. Sarno, Mayor, City of Springfield
Thomas Hoyer Jr., Mayor, City of Taunton
William Reichelt, Mayor, Town of West Springfield
James M. McKenna, Town Manager, Town of Winthrop
Scott Galvin, Mayor, City of Woburn
Joseph M. Petty, Mayor, City of Worcester

cc: Massachusetts House of Representatives